

Finance Docket No. 34284

February 23, 2004

Sylvia Greer
496 CR 253
Mico, TX 78056

E1-629
RL

Surface Transportation Board
Case Control Unit
1925 K Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20423-0001

Attention: Rini Ghosh
Fax No. (202) 565-9000

Re: Finance Docket No. 34284

received
2/24/04

Dear Ms. Ghosh:

My name is Sylvia Greer and I am presently 55 years of age. I am semi retired health care worker. My husband and I have been residents of the Medina Oaks subdivision since April of 2000. Our residence is located about ½ mile north of the proposed quarry perimeter and have several concerns about the proposed rail line and quarry.

In response to the Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement, I am submitting the following to be considered in the formal scoping process.

I believe Vulcan's proposed quarry and proposed SGR rail line, regardless of where the railroad is constructed, are connected actions, and should be studied in the same Environmental Impact Statement. The study should include direct impacts and alternatives to both projects. **This is especially important due to the size of the quarry that Vulcan intends to operate and the fact that it intends to operate 24 hours per day 7 days per week.**

Water Quality: We are concerned about the effects the quarry will have on water wells. Our well head is located about 100 feet above the proposed quarry elevation. The static water level of our well is 290 feet and is our only source of water. We understand that the quarry is located over the Edwards recharge zone. It is also our understanding that Vulcan plans to locate diesel storage tanks above the recharge zone. Is this prohibited? We also understand that dynamiting releases nitrates into the soil which eventually seeps into the water supply. We have additional concerns that quarrying to a depth of 200-250 feet will not leave enough substrate above the Edwards Aquifer to filter out the nitrates and diesel. If our water supply becomes contaminated or if wells run dry after the quarry process begins, who is liable for damages? We request that the Environmental Impact Study include monitoring the quality and flow of all existing water wells within 2 miles of the quarry perimeter. We also request that Vulcan

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Materials install permanent water monitoring stations around the quarry for periodic testing. Tests shall be conducted by an unbiased certified water quality testing laboratory and paid for by Vulcan Materials. Test reports should be made available to local residents and property owners.

Air Quality: We are concerned about the effects the quarry will have on the air quality. My husband and son are Asthmatic and I have concerns about the increase of dust particulate that will be generated by the blasting, crushing and transporting of limestone. With a south prevailing wind the dust will travel north toward our residence. In addition to the quality of the air we breathe the dust becomes an issue for us as house wives and for the whole community esthetically when we are blanketed in dust that rains out of the air on to trees grass, flowers, fruits and vegetables. Vulcan Materials should be required to provide dust abatement equipment at each dust emitting location. We request that a minimum of eight (8) equally spaced air quality monitoring stations be installed around the proposed quarry perimeter and one (1) air monitoring station for each mile of proposed rail line for continuous air monitoring for a three year period prior to operating the quarry. Tests shall be conducted by an unbiased certified air quality testing laboratory and paid for by Vulcan Materials. Test reports should be made available to local residents and property owners.

Noise Levels: We are concerned about the effects the quarry will have on the noise levels around the quarry and the rail lines. We can faintly hear the passing of the Union Pacific trains 10 miles away. We are concerned about the increased noise level of four trains per day 3 miles away. We are also concerned about the noise that will be generated by the blasting, rock crushing and conveying of material at the quarry location. We request that NC Level monitoring stations be installed around the proposed quarry perimeter and rail line for continuous monitoring for a three year period prior to operating the quarry or rail line. Tests shall be conducted by an unbiased certified testing laboratory and paid for by Vulcan Materials. Test reports should be made available to local residents and property owners.

There is also noise created by the back up signals of trucks as they move and load materials. A Vulcan representative indicated to me that if I wanted to be concerned about anything, those noises should concern me the most. This representative also indicated that there was noiseless "solar like" technology that would solve this issue of noise necessary for the safety of quarry workers that should be available soon. I believe the intent of the comment was to assure me that Vulcan would adopt that technology, however recent comments in the Hondo paper by representatives of Vulcan give me concern that Vulcan is more likely to consider the economics of adapting new technology rather than the imposition of the old technology on its neighbors or the effect on wild life. I therefore believe that due to the fact that this operation is intended to run during all daylight hours of every day Vulcan should be required to adopt the new silent technology prior to

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the opening of the quarry or building of the railroad. The issue of strobes for night work will be addressed later in my letter.

Environmental Impact: We choose Medina Oaks as tranquil natural habitat in the hill country to build our final dream home. Much of the value of our homestead is attributed to the tranquility and beauty of the natural habitat that surrounds our property. Why should a company such as Vulcan be allowed to profit by the destruction of this beautiful habitat. In certain parts of this area, people have observed birds that seek the various ponds of water, and fly to and from Mexico. An EIS should contain a study of their migration, and the compliance of this project with the Migratory Birds Treaty Act.

The plant that Vulcan points to as being a good neighbor is on the northside of San Antonio and operates on a scale much smaller than what is intended for Quihi. Its urban neighbors benefit from the fact that its operation cannot continue for another 55 years, that they knew it was there when they moved there and that they are not commuting a huge distance to gain a quiet peaceful retreat but have compromised for convenience sake. We have not fenced our land and have made every effort to leave the bulk of it to nature as it was.

Vulcan has operated a plant on 1283 for a long time. It was operated with no concern for the eye sore it created with thick dust up and down that road or the slick mush the dust created when rain was added to the mix. Vulcan only put in wheel washers and cleaned up its entry when it wanted to "appear" to be a good neighbor as their intent to create another quarry in Medina County was met with considerable resistance.

Grade Level Transportation Issues: We are concerned that a grade level railway will increase local travel delays, traffic hazards, flooding and road maintenance. We request the following Environmental Impact Studies (EIS) be included in your review:

An EIS to include a study by the Texas Department of Transportation on the grade separation at FM 2676.

An EIS to include a study on the grade separations needed for county roads, and all measures needed for traffic safety and flood prevention.

An EIS to include a complete study on the times and duration of rail traffic across any and all roads without grade separation, the effect of the delays, derailment, frequency, probability of accidents, stopping distances, noise levels and vibration, spills of chemicals and diesel fuels, or other hazardous materials being transported.

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An EIS to include a full flood analysis on all proposed and alternative routes of the railroad, and the quarry site as well, including avoidance of debris clogging the trestles during flooding.

An EIS to include a study of the effects 78,000 lb trucks traveling on FM 2676. Vulcan should be responsible for upgrading of state and county roads that the trucks travel on.

An EIS to include a study of the effects of the truck traffic on our unimproved county roads, and the increase in maintenance, the dangers to other vehicles, etc., the roads periodically closed for repair, for all routes, proposed and alternatives.

An EIS to include a study on the cumulative effects that new industries brought in by the rail and quarry will have on the Quihi area, with a full cost/benefit study. What will the maximum capacity of the SGR rail line-how many trains per day will it be able to handle?

As we understand that the primary site to which this quarry's product will travel is to and/or through Houston. We are concerned that the overloaded rail system in and to Houston will not be able to accept this product on the schedule Vulcan intends to deliver. If there is no place for the material to go will Vulcan cease production rather than leaving full cars of materials parked on the railway. I understand that this type of material receives one of the lowest railroad movement priorities.

Light pollution: I am not sure how this can be measured. I know that the operation of this industry 24 hours a day 7 days a week will be well lit. I am guessing that the intensity of the lights may well affect the view of the unspoiled sky full of stars that I thought I had acquired by moving here. I also have no doubt that it will affect the bat population that we depend on for insect control and the activities of other nocturnal animals even at some distance from the quarry itself. Even if the quarry could operate in silence and without vibration this would be an issue for wildlife and ecological balance in the area. In addition to the overall lighting of the site I understand that night operation of trucks will depend on strobes as a safety factor. I would think that their use (though quiet) would certainly confound any night life in flight in the area. I would appreciate an indication from EIS as to how the effects of this could be studied to predict the magnitude of the problem with a facility of this size in operation 7 nights per week.

I also understand that Vulcan will not progress its operation south to north but mine for some time at one site of the owned/leased/optioned property and then move to another site within the property for the benefit of the income of the land owners that it negotiated with for the property and profits. I believe that this type of movement will have a different and possibly greater, more rapid and more widespread detrimental affect to the habitat of the area. I believe that this

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intended practice should be considered in the scale of the impact study and that the scale of the study should be greatly expanded based on this intent.

As a tax paying property owner we would appreciate your attention to the above issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Sylvia Greer".

Sylvia Greer

cc: U.S. Congressman Henry Bonilla
U.S. Senator John Cornyn
Texas Senator Frank Madla
Texas Representative Timoteo Garza
Medina County Judge Jim Barden
Medina County Commissioner Royce Hartman